

Mr. Speaker, please join me in commending William A. Gallina of Bronx, New York for a remarkable life on the occasion of his 60th birthday.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES BUCKLEY

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 1999

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate and to pay tribute to Mr. James Buckley, Executive Director of University Neighborhood Housing Program in my South Bronx district. He was selected to receive a James A. Johnson Community Fellowship from the Fannie Mae Foundation for his significant contributions to the fields of affordable housing and community development. Mr. Buckley is one of only six individuals selected through a national nomination process to receive this fellowship in the inaugural year of this program.

Mr. Speaker, James Buckley founded the University Neighborhood Housing program (UNHP) in 1989 and has served as its Executive Director since then. As a Fordham University student in 1975, Mr. Buckley interned with the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NBCCC) as a community organizer, and he later served as its Executive Director. As a result of his organizing efforts at NBCCC, the Fordham Bedford Housing Corporation (FBHC) was formed, which has reclaimed thousands of units of housing and presently owns and/or manages 70 multi-family apartment buildings.

As the Director of the Reinvestment Project at the NBCCC, Mr. Buckley attracted over \$100 million in public and private funds to area neighborhoods, which led to the creation of 1,500 units of safe, sanitary, affordable housing units for community residents. As a result of these efforts, two additional non-profit community housing corporations were created that went on to develop residential properties with tenant or community ownership.

Mr. Speaker, the Johnson fellows Program was created to honor the leadership and distinguished service of former Fannie Mae Foundation Chairman James A. Johnson. The Fellows program is designed to reward and recognize outstanding leaders and promote innovation in the affordable housing and community development fields. Each fellow will receive a \$70,000 grant and plus a \$20,000 educational travel/study stipend to pursue a self-designed course of professional development to enhance the individual's skills and field experiences and to explore new solutions to current affordable housing or community development challenges.

Mr. Speaker, being selected for this program indicates that James Buckley has demonstrated that he has the ability and the desire to be an asset and a role model in our community. We are proud of his accomplishments and I know he will take full advantage of the opportunity presented to him. He is a terrific example for community leaders.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mr. James Buckley for his outstanding accomplishments, and in commending the Fannie Mae Foundation for honoring these six outstanding leaders and giving

them the opportunity to do even more for their communities.

HONORING MILLARD NELSON

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 1999

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay special tribute to Millard Nelson. Millard Nelson has distinguished himself by his life-long commitment to his family, his community and the Democratic Party.

Millard Nelson has worked as a farmer, substitute mail carrier, and office manager for the Pierce County Agriculture, Stabilization and Conservation Office. Millard has been dedicated to public service throughout his life. He served as the President of the Salem Town Board, a member of the Pierce County Board and the assessor for the Gilmanton Township. Millard has also been active in many conservation programs in his native Pierce County, and it is estimated that throughout his life he has planted more than 500,000 trees in Pierce County. These trees are Millard's lasting gift to future generations of Pierce County citizens.

Millard Nelson is perhaps best known for his life-long commitment to the Democratic Party. Millard was involved in the founding of the current Democratic Party in Wisconsin in 1949 and has served the party in a variety of capacities since that time. Millard and his wife Ellen have been pillars of the Democratic Party for over 50 years.

Mr. Speaker, this country needs more citizens like Millard Nelson. He has lived his life committed to the principle that we must make this world better for future generations. I rise today in the United States House of Representatives to honor Millard Nelson and thank him for his lifetime of commitment to Pierce County and the Wisconsin Democratic Party.

RECOGNIZING VALERIE SANDEFUR

HON. HEATHER WILSON

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 1999

Mrs. WILSON. Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring to your attention the outstanding accomplishment of Valerie Sandefur.

Valerie is a High School student at Albuquerque Academy, in Albuquerque, New Mexico and recently won the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary "Voice of Democracy" broadcast scriptwriting contest. The contest asked students to create a speech based on the theme "My Service to America." Her speech was judged the best from New Mexico.

Valerie spoke about how she and all of us could better serve our country by re-enforcing the meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance. In her speech she said:

"We are no longer a nation indivisible, we are increasingly a nation invisible. My service to America is to put the meaning back into the pledge of allegiance and to create again the idea of 'one nation.' However, there are two challenges to regaining our allegiance—apathy and ignorance."

She continued to describe how apathy leads to a loss of participation and interest in democracy. Valerie then told how ignorance has caused even greater problems than apathy. She said she feels American society is devaluing virtues such as ambition, leadership and heroism, and that Americans are losing their uniquely American character, their sense of nationality and their spirit of patriotism.

There are lessons in her speech the entire nation could learn from. Valerie demonstrated the ambition and intelligence needed for success now and in the future. Valerie finished her speech by imploring all of us to strive to put meaning back into the Pledge of Allegiance. I submit the text of her script for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the VFW for sponsoring the "Voice of Democracy" contest and I ask that we recognize Valerie Sandefur for her achievement by striving to do what she has—put meaning back into the Pledge of Allegiance.

"MY SERVICE TO AMERICA"—1998-99 VFW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

(By New Mexico Winner, Valerie Sandefur)

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands . . . and that's about where I forgot. I was in middle school. Actually it was more like the middle of a muddle. But I was not alone. When asked many students couldn't remember these sacred words, and more significantly they, like most of America didn't understand the true meaning of what they recited each morning. I've heard many of my friends ask—what's the point of learning this 'stuff'? For me the answer found is that who we are as a society is based on what they call 'stuff'. What I call history. And the history lesson for today is that we are no longer a nation indivisible, we are increasingly a nation invisible. Therefore, my service to America is to put the meaning back into the pledge of allegiance, and to create again the idea of 'one nation'. However, there are two challenges to regaining our allegiance—apathy and ignorance.

Let us first consider apathy. It is the constitutional right of every citizen over the age of 18 to vote. Yet, in the 1996 presidential elections apathy paralyzed roughly 50% of registered voters. Politicians struggled to recapture the public's fading attention. They failed. As Christopher Hitchens wrote for The Nation magazine it was really a case of the Blind leading the Dumb. Presidential candidates spend \$138 million dollars on a public that in many cases, didn't even care enough to show up. . . .

But it's not just lack of attendance at the pools that demonstrates our growing apathy. The education of our children has become a diluted and narrow stream that too often focuses on the 'real world' of MTV rather than the lessons of the world of the past. Many classrooms no longer have an American flag, and we have stopped teaching the words to the national anthem. In fact at a World Series game this year, Tony Bennett chose not to sing the national anthem. . . . And no one seemed to care. It seems that Mr. Bennett left not only his heart in San Francisco but also his patriotism.

But apathy is not the only challenge to our allegiance, my service to America includes confronting ignorance in myself and others. Consider a recent political cartoon in the Washington Post. The first part of this two-fold cartoon shows a young impressionable child in 1958 wearing a cowboy hat and glasses. He fondly dreams about the famous singing cowboy Roy Rogers, who stood for respect, honesty and goodness, sitting of